



NRCS Talking Points for the USDA Farm Bill Listening Session August 25, 2005

- ◆ Codify the definition and policy regarding subsistence definitions and eligibility for Farm Bill Programs for private Native Corporation Lands in rural Alaska
- ◆ Fully recognize the unique needs of rural Alaska and the fact that current farm programs are structured for lower 48 agriculture and need adaptation to rural Alaska
- ◆ Fully recognize the unique structure of ownership and use of rural Alaska private lands between tribes, corporations and communities and develop policy definitions and policy that fit rural Alaska private lands and subsistence economies such as the definition of beginning farmer
- ◆ Develop a funding formula for regional/state equity to increase funding to Alaska. Recognize that there are 44 million acres of eligible private lands in Alaska, the size of the entire State of Iowa
- ◆ Recognize the need and fund a culturally based education and outreach program to rural Alaska landowners on programs and services under farm bill that meets the unique needs of rural Alaska
- ◆ Recognize the need and fund Technical Assistance programs tailored to rural Alaska landowners needs for subsistence agriculture
- ◆ Increase funding for the WHIP program in Alaska. NRCS has historically provided very little funding to Alaska, much work remains to enhance conservation practices on private lands
- ◆ Reduce and streamline definitions for cost share requirements for rural Alaska private lands. A high level of poverty and minimal local cash economies are insufficient to support high cost share regulations

- ◆ Provide full funding and support for establishing and maintaining Tribal Conservation Districts throughout Alaska
- ◆ Increase and develop appropriate staffing that recognizes rural Alaska's unique needs. Provide Tribal Liaisons to ensure support and technical assistance to Tribal Conservation District
- ◆ Develop and fund special projects through existing non-government organizations (NGO) to ensure effective outreach and improve culturally based locally adapted services to rural Alaska private lands and landowners/subsistence users.
- ◆ When assigned or transferring new staff to Alaska, develop better staff orientation and training on the social and political composition of rural Alaska. Also, supplement staff training with cultural training and cross-cultural communication training to better prepare NRCS employees for interaction with and understanding of Alaska Natives.